

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1153

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDON DERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 020

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: SECSTATE REES EXPANDS ON RECALLED CONVENTION

REF: (A) BELFAST 14 (B) BELFAST 10

1. IN PRESS CONFERENCE STORMONT JAN. 13 SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND MERLYN REES EXPANDED HIS STATEMENT IN COMMONS JAN. 12 ON RECALL OF CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION FEB 3 FOR ONE MONTH. HE REITERATED THAT THREE MATTERS WOULD BE PUT TO CONVENTION CHAIRMAN SIR ROBERT LOWRY: WHETHER THERE COULD BE AGREEMENT ON PARTNERSHIP, WHETHER COMMITTEES COULD BE USEFUL PART OF THAT AND WHETHER PROGRESS COULD BE MADE ON AN EVOLUTIONARY BASIS. UNDER STILL QUESTIONING REES ACKNOWLEDGED THAT "PARTNERSHIP" MEANT "POWER-SHARING" AT CABINET LEVEL. HE SUGGESTED NEW DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT COULD INITIALLY BE BASED ON 1973 ASSEMBLY ACT TO SAVE THE TIME NECESSARY FOR NEW LEGISLATION, (PARTIALLY CONFIRMING REV. IAN PAISLEY'S "HUNCH", REFTEL B). SECSTATE SAID INCREASED ULSTER REPRESENTATION AT PARLIAMENT WOULD NOT "COME OUT OF THE BLUE" AND UNEQUIVOCALLY RULED OUT INTEGRATION WITH U.K. AS ALTERNATIVE ALLUDING TO TREND TO DEVOLUTION MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE. HE WAS LESS CATEGORICAL ABOUT REFERENDUM POSSIBILITY BUT BELIEVED IT PREFERABLE FOR POLITICIANS TO RISE TO OCCASION OFFERED BY RENEWED CONVENTION. HE SUGGESTED

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IT BECAME POLITICIANS TO TAKE THE LEAD AND NOT JUST "MOVE ALONG

WITH THE VIEWS THAT ARE THERE". REES DISMISSED POSSIBILITY THAT CONVENTION COULD BE TRANSFORMED TO ASSEMBLY SAYING ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD BEFORE NEW GOVERNMENT FORMED. HE AGAIN STATED BRITISH WOULD NOT RPT NOT PULL OUT BUT DOUBTED THAT COMMONS WOULD LOOK KINDLY ON PROLONGED DIRECT RULE. HE REFUSED BE DRAWN ON NUMBER SPECIAL AIR SERVICE TROOPS ON DUTY IN SOUTH ARMAGH.

2. MOST ULSTER POLITICAL GROUPS NOW EMBARKING ON INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS AND PLANNING IN ADVANCE REOPENING CONVENTION. MINORITY PARTIES HAVE ALL DECLARED WILLINGNESS HOLD INTER-PARTY TALKS IMMEDIATELY BUT UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION (UUUC) HAS SHOWN NO DISPOSITION DO SO. THERE ONE REPORT THAT ULSTER DEFENSE ASSOCIATION (UDA) COMMANDER ANDY TYRIE HAS STATED THAT UDA OBLIGED TO STAND WITH UUUC BECAUSE OF DEMANDS OF "THE PEOPLE ON THE GROUND" BUT CONGEN UNABLE SO FAR TO CONFIRM REPORT.
SPICER

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